

Minutes
Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
November 25, 2014 at 7:00 pm

Members present:

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary
Wayne Jonas Bealer, Assistant Secretary
William F. Cinfici

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office
Deborah A.S. Hoag, Department of Public Works

Others present:

Jason P. Shaner, Impact Engineering Group
Patrick J. Dolan, Dolan Construction Inc.
Pablo Tejada, Olivet Boys & Girls Club of Reading & Berks County
Carole Duran, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the November meeting to order, recognized the newly-appointed Mr. Cinfici, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Bealer moved to accept the November 25th agenda, as presented. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the November agenda.

Subdivision and Land Development:

Pendora Park Olivet Boys & Girls Club – preliminary land development plan [0:01.15]

Mr. Shaner introduced his team, recalled the September 23rd presentation, and the staff review. He reported having met with the Public Works Department and other progress made, including soil infiltration tests, the landscaping design, the sanitary sewer lateral design, floodplain issues, the relocation of the water main, and the design of the building's fire suppression. He said they weren't yet ready for approval, but offered to answer questions. He hoped to get the Commission's opinion on some requested waivers. Asked for more detail on the sanitary sewer route, he described it as running along the 'outskirts' of the Park, in a path that avoids greater impact to the existing trees, toward a manhole in Forrest Street. Mr. Bealer wondered why it wasn't proposed for a connection in South 19th Street, and if they were just avoiding the streets altogether. Mr. Shaner conceded that his was a longer route, but felt it was a better path. Asked about the Water Authority's response to the water main design, Mr. Shaner said they were amenable to the concept, though requesting some minor revisions related to the fire-suppression system. He said they were satisfied with the route and general profile. Ms. Hoag raised several issues, still to be formally communicated in a written review, including stormwater impacts to the building, and the specific flooding impacts related to the Egelman's Dam inundation zone. Mr. Miller reported that a number of his original comments had been addressed in the revisions, others yet to be, and some that can be resolved in the final-plan phase, including the pavilion relocation and the landscaping specifics. He offered his support for the curb and sidewalk-standard waivers. Mr. Shaner distributed a written request and explained that no curb was proposed, given the existing infrastructure and drainage pattern, and the 'minimal traffic' on South 19th Street. Of the sidewalk, he felt the applicability of the waiver to depend on one's perception of the project/lease area, which wasn't formally designated. He described proposed connections to a pedestrian bridge spanning the creek channel, to the parking north of the proposed building, across the building frontage and to an existing paved path to its south. Mr. Miller agreed that the limits of the Olivet Club's lease were unclear, and preferred the waivers if only to acknowledge the deviation from the normal installation and dimensional standards. Mr. Bealer wondered about the City engineers' determination of curbing needed for the conveyance of stormwater runoff. Ms. Hoag requested additional grading detail on the extent of an existing road-side, brick-lined swale. Mr. Shaner agreed to clarify that with additional elevations. He said most of the runoff is conveyed to the existing creek channel, and the remaining water from the street conveyed to an inlet north of the building. Mr. Lauter wondered about the 'before and after' condition, and how the swale would interface with the proposed sidewalk installation. Mr. Shaner briefly explained the existing sheet flow toward the Rose Valley storm sewer, and the collection from the relatively-elevated building position. He described a grass-lined swale, between the street and the building. Mr. Miller noted the inconsistency in the existing swale and the variation in the South 19th Street cartway itself. Mr. Lauter noted the unusual situation 'downstream' of the garages without any setback. He recalled rocks and other debris having washed down South 19th Street in heavy rainfall. He continued, questioning the adequacy of the sidewalk for a facility anticipating pedestrian traffic (*i.e.* children). Mr. Shaner attempted to describe the existing Park paths toward the corner of

South 19th and Forrest streets. Asked about provisions for a drop-off area, Mr. Tejada said there will be some busses from schools and a basketball program, and a number of parent drop offs, in addition to the visitors by foot and bike. Mr. Miller noted the neighborhood distribution of the Olivet Club's facilities, assuming that indicated a primarily pedestrian travel. Asked to estimate the daily visitation, Mr. Tejada guessed between 75 and 100, their modes of transportation relative to their ages. Mr. Shaner indicated that a bike rack is proposed. Turning back to the stormwater planning, Mr. Cinfici asked about the drainage from sidewalk areas. Mr. Shaner explained that it would be pitched toward the swale, with the rest of a small plaza area at the front door. He reminded that the swale only covers half of the cartway in a *crowned* street.

Mr. Dolan displayed architectural renderings, showing the massing of the gymnasium portion and the colors: brown for the roofing, and what appeared as muted shades of green for the masonry block and metal paneling. Another view approximated the landscaping screen from the rear (Park interior) elevation perspective. Asked about the texture of the masonry, Mr. Dolan said it is intended in a split-faced block, but graffiti concerns have been raised, and they've considered finishes that would be easier to clean. Of the security measures, he mentioned appropriate lighting of the parking lot and building, and some surveillance cameras.

Mr. Miller said he didn't have much to add, but the more-technical points of his review, and preferred to formally address the waivers at the plan approval stage. He referred to a letter granting a 60-day extension of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code limit. Mr. Lauter moved to extend the review of the 'Pondora Park Olivet Boys & Girls Club' plan by 60 days, as requested in a November 10th letter from the engineer. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to approve a one-month extension of the Olivet Club's preliminary plan.

Resolution #38-2014

Mr. Raffaelli suggested increasing the share of the masonry and a different orientation of the windows. Mr. Dolan mentioned an earlier scheme relying on clerestory windows, scrapped after considering the classroom perspective. He thought they could add to the masonry.

Other business:

§508.3 agreement to extension-Fritz Island WWTP Facilities Upgrade Project [0:32.47]

Mr. Miller referred to a November 11th email requesting another one-month extension. He thought an approval might be possible at the following meeting, based on their progress with other permitting agencies.

Mr. Bealer moved to extend the review of the 'Fritz Island WWTP' plan by one month, as requested in a November 11th email from the project manager. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to approve another one-month extension of the 'Fritz Island WWTP Facilities Upgrade Project' final plan.

Resolution #39-2014

review the draft October 28, 2014 meeting minutes [0:34.15]

Mr. Raffaelli requested a single edit. Mr. Bealer moved to accept the October meeting minutes, with the revision. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the October 28th meeting minutes.

Resolution #40-2014

Mr. Miller revealed the highway occupancy permit (Pennsylvania Department of Transportation), issued earlier that day, for driveways already constructed at 116 and 124 South 9th Street, on either side of the Jet Set Restaurant. He said this clears the way for action on the 'Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area' plan, first submitted in July 2011, and extended since.

Mr. Miller reported on some pending and new business anticipated in 2015, including: a revival of the 2010 'Barley Square' project at 125 South 2nd Street, a final plan for the 47 'Homes at Riverside' at 1001 Weiser Street, a plan for a grocery store's unauthorized construction at 1336 North 12th Street, a planned 'Masano Auto Park' at 825 East Wyomissing Boulevard, the Oakbrook Brewing microbrewery planned for 628 Park Avenue, the Humane Society's expansion into the WTVE studio building at 1729 North 11th Street which effectively negates its 2013 'Building Addition' plan for 1801 North 11th Street, and a zoning appeal for an additional 23 off-street parking spaces 612 McKnight Street revising the 2012 'Gehris Self Storage' plan.

Mr. Bealer remarked on the eroded condition of a concrete retaining wall at the northwest corner of the 'Spring Street Subway', encouraging the City's attention where the study and engineering phases of a solution may take several years. Ms. Hoag noted potential complications over responsibility and jurisdiction. Referring to an area

about 500 feet to the west, at 601 Spring Street, Mr. Lauter wondered about the lack of landscaping at the driveway serving the 'RDG North Reading Cell Site' telecommunications tower, completed in September.

Mr. Miller mentioned the need to advertise the 2015 meeting dates, and likely before the Commission meets in December. He asked if there were any issues in keeping the same 'fourth Tuesday' pattern. Mr. Bealer checked for holiday conflicts, and found none.

Discussion continued on the Masano Auto Group's plan for the former Baldwin Hardware facility.

Mr. Lauter moved to adjourn the November meeting. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the November 25th meeting. – 8:09p